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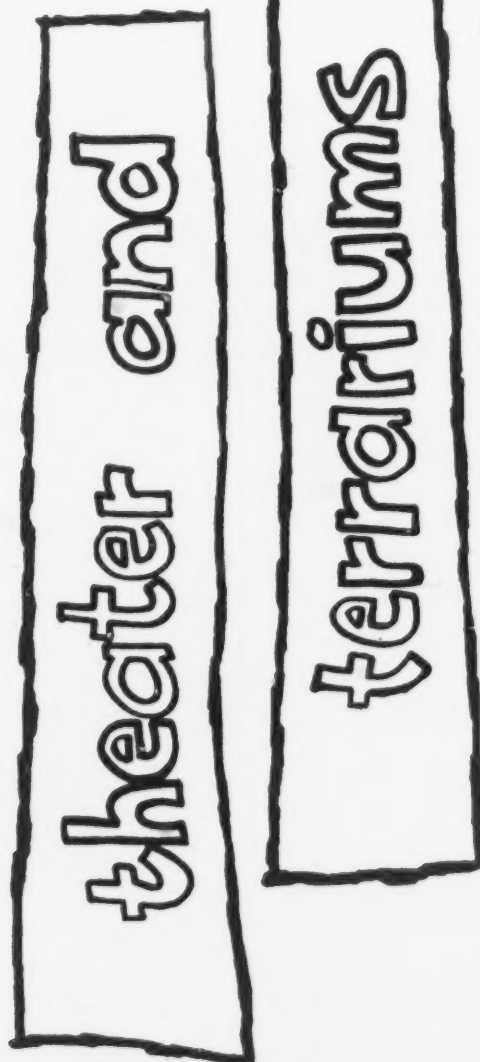
ABSTRACT

Contents of this account of the adaptation of the open classroom philosophy of education in New Rochelle, beginning with a summer Title I E.S.E.A. remedial reading program, include the following: (1) an account of the experience of a traditional teacher in converting to an open classroom; (2) a definition of the approach and a description of the learning principles it is based on; (3) a documentation of the New Rochelle School District reaching the point of implementing the open classroom approach, including teachers' and administrator's motivation to change and the utilization and administration of the corridors; (4) parents' relation to the open classroom; and, (5) a discussion of formulations of role for staff in the future. The appendices contain teachers' accounts of movement towards an open classroom approach, the text of a questionnaire sent to parents regarding the changes in classroom and staff organization, a sample individual and weekly record, and floor plans of representative classrooms. (JM)

OPEN EDUCATION

ESEA TITLE I

ED 059334



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FOREWORD

At a time when educators continue to search for innovative ways to teach youngsters with learning problems, a promising approach has evolved. This approach which Commissioner Nyquist refers to as "Open Education" appears to offer new hope to teachers of disadvantaged children. As the Commissioner stated on December 7, 1970, "Respect for and trust in the child are perhaps the most basic principles, with the assumption that all children want to learn and will learn, if the emphasis is on learning and not on teaching, on each child's thinking process and not on rote skill acquisition, on freedom and responsibility rather than conformity and following direction. It is a more humanistic kind of education."

As an additional service to those districts interested in explaining the possibility of implementing Open Education programs, the Division of Education for the Disadvantaged in cooperation with the Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education is providing this detailed study of the experience of the New Rochelle School District as it moved toward implementing "Open Education" in selected elementary classrooms.

The original manuscript was prepared by Jennifer Andreae, consultant in Open Education for the district and was reviewed by Peggy L. Azbill and Ruth C. Flurry, Associates in the Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education. Photographs were provided by Fred I. Zabriskie, and charts and drawings by Barbara Moffitt. Peter A. Martin, Bureau of Elementary Curriculum Development did the final editing and prepared the materials for publication.

I believe this publication which honestly attempts to identify problems connected with an "Open Education" approach as well as to highlight the advantages, will be a practical addition to the planning instruments available to local school personnel developing ESEA Title I programs for disadvantaged youngsters.

Irving C. Ratchick
Assistant Commissioner of Education
Division of Education for the
Disadvantaged

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Introduction

The idea of the "open classroom" is becoming increasingly popular with the American public and with educators at nearly all levels, including commissioners of education in several states, school superintendents, principals, and teachers. Within the past 3 years, many American educators have visited the infant, primary, and junior schools in England to see what they are doing, to glean ideas for adaptation to American classrooms, or to discover a model which can be transferred intact in the hope of solving American educational problems.

In many instances British educators have been invited to the United States to facilitate the development and implementation of the philosophy so successfully employed in Britain.

A large number of books describing the British philosophy, including its approach and how it evolved, have been published in both England and America.

Many school districts throughout this country are attempting to implement the philosophy of the open classroom in some, if not all, of their schools and classes. However, almost nothing has been written to document exactly what happens or what is involved when a school district makes this commitment.

The following is a documentation of the New Rochelle School District reaching the point of implementing the open classroom approach. More important, it is an account of the inevitable confusions, problems, frustrations, feelings, and satisfactions on the part of the teachers, parents, children, and the British consultant.

Just as children progress through stages in their growth and development toward adulthood, so it would seem that school districts, administrators, teachers, parents, children, and consultants must also progress through certain stages as they move toward implementing an open classroom.

All the teachers involved report they were and still are "feeling their way." Though they have acquired more experience, they are the first to realize that they have far to go. As one of the teachers put it:

We are really just beginning and this is really like my first year of teaching, yet worse, because then I was certain of a few things; now every day is new and unpredictable - I could never go back, even though going ahead looks, from my present vantage point, to be quite rough for a long while.



Theresa, Theater, and Terrariums

[The individual experience, particularly in the realm of feelings, is an essential part of the implementation and continuation of open education; thus, it seems appropriate to begin with actual expression of one traditional teacher's perception of the changes which occurred in her as she progressed toward becoming an open classroom teacher in New Rochelle.]

In being asked to write down "how it all began," I find myself faced with the almost impossible task of pulling the ends together.

My teacher training was typical and traditional, i.e., testing, evaluating, learning classroom routine and discipline.

I taught seventh and eighth grades for three years. The first two years of teaching was rather good by most standards, including my own. I had "control" of all my classes; lesson plans were well-written; and my performances for visiting principals and supervisors were well-received. By the third year, however, I was getting bored, and so were my students. To overcome this I tried basing social studies lessons on projects. This helped some, but everyone was not really interested. At the end of that year I left the teaching profession for a change of pace.

After a year in another job, I missed teaching and applied for a job in a number of Westchester school districts. The principal of a New Rochelle school called and asked me to take over a fourth grade class. School had already been in session for one month. I protested that these children were too young for me to teach because my previous experience had been with 12- and 13-year-olds. But I finally took the job! And so I met the group of children who would make me revolutionize my thinking about teaching and cause me to get involved in what I later found is

called an "open classroom."

Taking over this class a month after school had begun, I systematically went about asserting my authority and power until everyone knew "who" was in charge.

I had my usual success in obtaining and maintaining control with most of the class; but one little girl, named Theresa, with red hair and freckles, wouldn't bow so readily. Her former teachers had told me that she was a terrible discipline problem. She would never sit in her seat, fought constantly with the other children, was behind the class in reading and math skills and in general would "drive you crazy"; and she did. It was a constant struggle of wills from the day we met until she finally taught me to see how she learned, and made me see other children as individual learners, too.

I began "teaching reading" something new to me. The teacher who had the class originally had divided the children into three ability groups. The groups were left as she had arranged them and meticulously followed the lesson plans from the manual. I recalled being told years before in college, "The people who wrote those manuals know more about teaching reading than you do."

After approximately three months of "teaching," both the children and I were unhappy with everything. I decided that after vacation we would have to do something different. My concern was voiced to a colleague who helped me begin an individualized reading program. This plan and redheaded Theresa were to be my downfall, or should I say, my redemption from the traditional classroom.

The reading became much more interesting and led children to talk with each other about their books. Some of them decided they'd like to

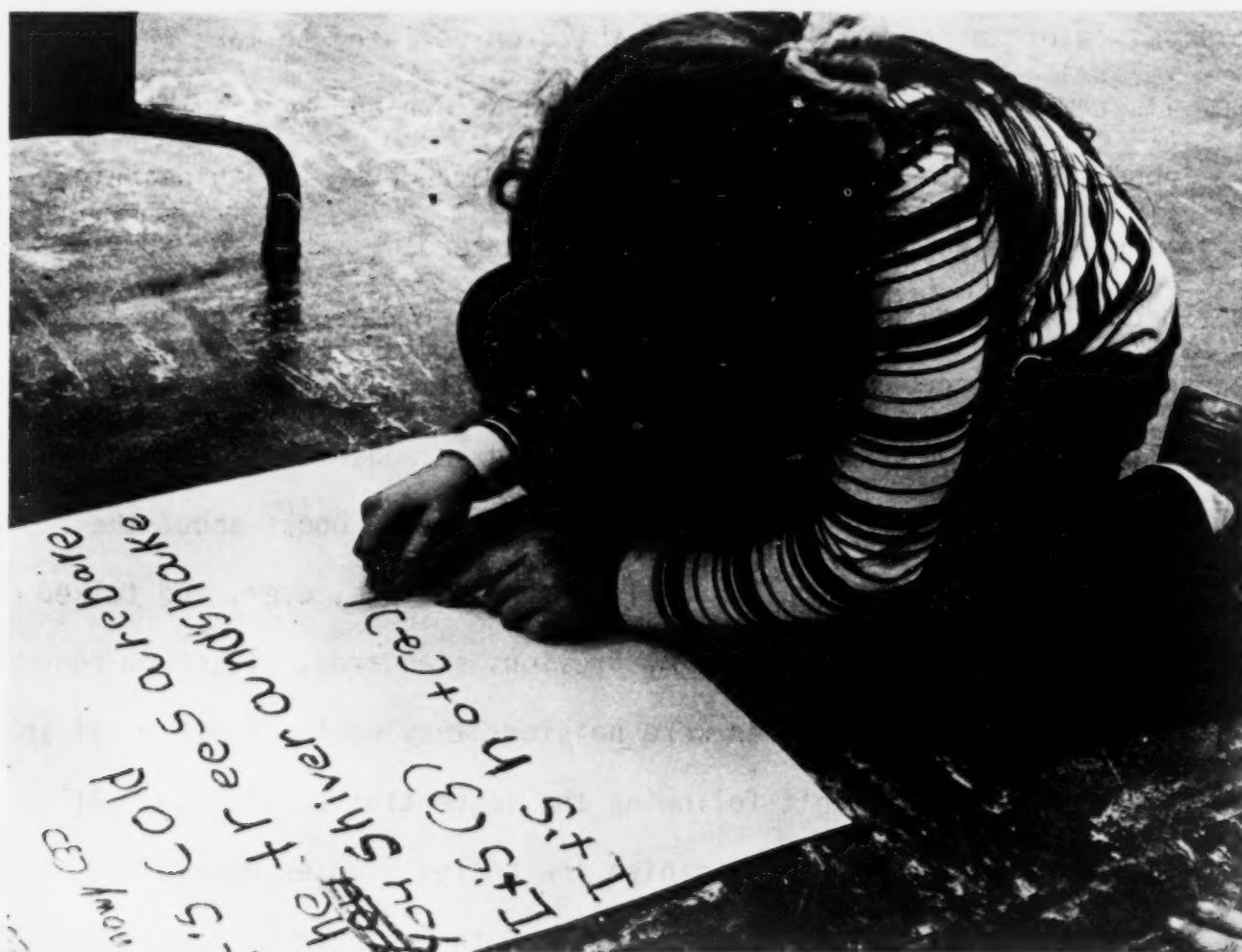
put on a play about a book they had read; soon they were doing bigger and better productions, including scenery design and costume making. It turned out that Theresa was an outstanding actress and director. Soon, she was taking eight to ten children away from my lessons as she held her rehearsals, making it necessary for me to revise my teaching so that children could break away from my group. The class began to divide itself into interest groups as we studied other areas of the curriculum. For example, we started a typical lesson on plant life; this led us into a discussion of terrariums, with some children deciding to make one. After its completion, one child brought a chameleon and we soon had five chameleons, two snakes, two gerbils, a few salamanders, two guinea pigs, and some pregnant guppies which were lovingly tended. The two girls later decided to provide a "real" aquarium. After researching the life needs of guppies, scrounging around someone's attic and coming up with an old pump, bit by bit, the girls constructed an aquarium.

As all this was taking place, I began to provide books about the various animals in our room. The children read, wrote, drew, and talked about their animals. According to my previous standards, classroom control had been lost; the children were noisier, they wouldn't sit still in their seats, and they weren't following the sequential curriculum. At this rate, the class would never finish the Social Studies book. We were spending far too long on animal life and the chapter on rocks should have been started. I truly worried about all this, but helping the children learn in school was fun. The children were happier and much more interested in everything they were learning.

At this point, two other teachers from my school and I visited an "open school" in New York City. Later we talked intensely about moving

to rooms near each other to make a start at implementing more of the "open classroom" philosophy the following year. Another teacher joined us and we persuaded the principal to give us a corridor of classrooms where we could work together in attempting to carry out this approach.

If Theresa had given up and been put down by my initial assertion of authority, I might never have come to know what an "open classroom" is, and how exciting it can be for both the teachers' and the children's learning.



The Open Classroom

Definition

The "open classroom" is one of several terms being used to define a way of teaching which has become widespread in the primary schools of England; it is a way of looking at and thinking about children, learning, and knowledge.

It is characterized by openness and trust, and by a spatial openness of schools: doors are ajar and children are free to come and go, bringing objects of interest in and taking objects of interest out. The organization of each room is open, subject to change with changing needs. Children move comfortably in this openness from place to place and from activity to activity.

Time is open -- open to permit and release and serve children rather than to constrain and prescribe and master. The curriculum is open to significant choice by adults and by children as a function of the needs and interests of each child at each moment.

Perhaps most fundamental, "open education" is characterized by an openness of self. Persons are openly sensitive to and supportive of other persons, not closed off by anxiety, threat, customs and role. Feelings are exposed, acknowledged, and respected, not withheld in fear and defensiveness. Administrators are open to initiative on the part of teachers; teachers are open to the possibilities inherent in children; children are open to the possibilities inherent in other children, in materials, in themselves.

In short, open education implies an environment in which the possibility for exploration and learning of the self and the world are unobstructed. The best way to help a child utilize his capabilities is to create a climate in which there is both support and motivation for him to do so. For example, to contribute to his capabilities as an author and to his skills in writing, the teacher should strive for an environment in which he will have something meaningful to say; to promote ability as a reader, create an environment in which he will find personal value in books; to contribute to his capabilities as a thinker, establish room and reason

for thought. The environment includes not only the classroom, but the rest of the world as well, including the corridors, the grounds, the homes of the children, and the community itself, all of which are believed to offer useful and valuable inputs to education.

Philosophy

The philosophy of the open classroom is based on the belief that "education is not a thing apart from life itself. Education can only be lived to the full by the child if it is valued by his parents and by the community in which he lives."

The philosophy of the open classroom has evolved from a number of great thinkers and educators whose thoughts and writings have spanned the centuries and the continents of the world:

1. Rousseau's assertion that education is living.
2. Pestalozzi's belief in the child's capacity to learn for himself through living "according to nature."
3. Froebel's aim to "stir up, to animate and to strengthen, the pleasure and power of the human being to labor uninterruptedly at his own education."
4. John Dewey's belief that learning results from doing and, therefore, to preserve the unity of the child's experience, the project method of learning should precede studying separate subjects.
5. Maria Montessori's emphasis on the importance of the environment and the necessity for children to learn through their senses.
6. Piaget's insight into the way children develop thinking skills.

Learning Principles

From these and other pioneers, we have learned the following fundamental principles concerning how children grow, develop and learn:

1. The child grows as a whole being with his social, emotional, intellectual, physical, and moral growth closely interwoven and interrelated. Therefore, education is concerned with the whole child, not just his academic learning. As much attention and opportunity is needed for social, emotional physical, and moral growth as for cognitive growth.
2. Every individual has a unique design for growth and a different learning style. Children differ in their approach to learning and in the rate and content of what they learn. A real appreciation and understanding of the uniqueness of each individual will promote individual learning, which allows children to develop at their own pace in the crucial early years of school.
3. Learning is a continuous process in which a child builds an awareness of himself and his environment. Children learn to think in stages. In the early stages, they learn mainly from the testimony of their senses and not so much through words. The majority of primary school children cannot merely be told "what they should know." A learner has to organize material into his own behavior, which is a constant process of assimilating and adapting.
4. Learning occurs when a child is totally involved in his own exploration and discovery. It is an active, rather than a passive, process. Children learn from experience, from exploration, and from active participation in discovery, with

time provided for reflection and practice.

5. A responsive environment promotes the initiative of children, their participation and involvement, and their sense of responsibility and self-discipline. In order for children to grow into healthy, independent adults, they must have opportunities to express their natural urge toward independence at an early age.
6. The child's own motivation should be the focal point of his learning. This will provide the most effective, efficient, and relevant growth.

Implication

When one is committed to the above principles, he has a responsibility for applying them in some system or organization of education. The open classroom philosophy of education embodies each of these principles.



The Open Classroom as it Developed in New Rochelle

The Background and Impetus for Change

The impetus for change toward the open classroom philosophy of education in New Rochelle resulted from 1) the motivation of the teachers; 2) the openness of the school board to consider ideas and recommendations from representatives of the community, teachers, and members of the administration; and the recognition that not enough children were achieving their educational potential.

Teachers and administrators were asking themselves: Why in America do we have so many underachievers in our schools? Why do we have so many "turned-off" students? Why is natural curiosity stopped short by an adult-imposed curriculum, when a child learns continuously and naturally about the world around him before he enters school? How can we keep that spark alive?

In the summer of 1968, a remedial reading program with a difference was put into operation. This program was made possible through the availability of ESEA Title I funds.

For the first time, teachers provided language experiences based on the following belief:

What the child thinks about he can say;
what he says can be written (or dictated);
what has been written can be read;
he can read what he has written and what others
have written for him to read.

It suggests that each child experiences different activities and then talks, writes, and reads about what he has done. With this belief as a basis, the teachers were encouraged to use materials such as

paint, clay, blocks, animals, tape recorders and, in particular, the children's own experiences outside school.

Teachers Motivation to Change

From this tentative beginning, several ideas were formulated and later developed in different ways. During this summer experience, teachers began to see that children could learn from other than traditional methods.

Danny, a third-grader, who wanted to read, was unable to because of several problems. When his teacher used the approach above, she discovered that Danny wanted to be a doctor. She managed to borrow a stethoscope and a doctor's coat. Danny wore the doctor's clothing and equipment, and this spurred him to make up stories (which the teacher recorded for him) about being a doctor. The stories could be read back to him verbatim. He was taken on a tour of Harlem Hospital and his status in the class grew overnight. He began to wear his glasses again because "doctors wear them"; and with the stethoscope about his neck, he was known as Doctor Danny.

After their summer of experiences, and with new insights, some of the teachers returned to their classrooms in the fall and took a different look at what they had been doing. Working independently in their different elementary schools, they made significant beginnings in opening up their classes. At this point, no attempt was made to label it "open classroom."

The following is an account of how one teacher began:*

During the 1967-68 school year, a program was introduced to my class, a program designed to bring new ideas and

*See Appendix - Other Teachers' Accounts of Experiences

the children's experience into the language arts or reading program. At first I thought I had always been doing what was being suggested. I was still looking for a kit or manual of directions.

However, I began to focus on the everyday incidents and experiences of the children. For example, Stevie was in the traditional "low" reading group and showed little or no interest in reading and related work. Then one morning he came to school a hero because the day before he had fallen from a sharp drop onto rocks, cut himself, and had been rushed to the hospital. This caused genuine concern in the reading group. We began to write a large experience chart about Stevie. Two other children illustrated it in very gory details. Words such as blood, scar, etc. came easily to the children. We took the large chart and transferred it to a stencil. The next day everyone had his own copy, with a special vocabulary list at the bottom. Stevie's own feeling about himself improved as he became more popular with his peers. He seemed to feel a sense of importance that a story had been written about him and that this story was important enough to be used in a reading group. Other children began to tell about things that happened to them. We began producing our own books. It was only a beginning -- a tiny deviation from the traditional basal readers.

The following summer I was involved in the summer school where we used The Language Experience Manual, in a kindergarten room which had tables (instead of desks), blocks, a doll corner, and other kindergarten equipment and materials. The children in this class were third graders. I tried to take advantage of the situation and did a lot of talking with the children about school. However, the talking and the work from the manuals remained two very separate things.

Returning to my own classroom, in the fall of 1968, I threw out my desk to give more space for the painting and reading areas. I intended to approach reading and beginning reading through the children's art work. At this point, we were putting captions under the children's paintings in an effort to make the children use their paintings for words. Finally, the children began to break away from painting to just writing. "Do I have to write with my painting?" they asked. This struck home -- "Of course you don't! You paint what you want the way you want."

The children then began to approach writing from other interest areas, such as from the reading area. There was a big chart of each child's particular growth and

interests, but there seemed a need for more organization in the classroom. So, the children were rotated daily; they had no choice because I felt it didn't seem fair that all children didn't do some of each activity. They must do some writing whether they had anything to write or not; so they were made to copy sentences about themselves.

Now we had planned activities in painting, clay, writing, and reading. The children were assigned to one of these activities each day for about 30-45 minutes. The reading and writing were separated by moving writing to the front of the room and reading to the back. There was no attempt to involve math in the activities -- we still did that out of a workbook. Science would come later. The children were being systematically rotated as groups until a few expressed a desire to go back and finish a project or activity; then we got confused. It was my discretion which decided who would do what activity.

Children were most interested in painting, perhaps because it was the freest activity. I tried to extend their interests. A workbench, found in the custodian's office, was moved outside in the corridor. We also found blocks and moved these to our room. Yet, there was still something wrong. The activities were isolated with no correlation between any of them. Children were going to an activity for the activity's sake, i.e., "Today's my turn to paint, therefore, I must paint." It was obvious the children were also feeling the meaninglessness of the activity because they started to say "I just don't feel like painting today." Then I began to let them make the choice, saying, "Who wants to paint today?" Though the activities remained separated from each other, the children's interest span was growing, which caused the activities to take up more and more of the day. Now, I felt terribly guilty feelings if I couldn't get to every reading group every day. There were still formal phonics lessons and as the one anchor to something formal, the Language Arts Workbook, was used with groups. Finally, the children came to the point where they couldn't take the workbooks as every page was directed any longer. They were also getting tired of listening to each other; for after each activity we would talk about what they had done. Though it was important for each child to show something he had done, we belabored the point too much.

Now I realize that if they felt so desperate about showing their product, it meant they weren't getting enough personal attention during the activity or process. Until now, my role had been to stick to the academics during activities, and to reward academic behavior at the reading

or writing table. Other activities received only incidental attention for I didn't hold conversations or show as much interest in these areas. After discussing an activity, the class moved to language time and reading groups.

As the activity periods grew longer, with the children being more involved in what they were doing, there were some definite concerns:

1. that each child wasn't reading every day under my guidance;
2. that the children's handwriting and spelling instruction was not systematic;
3. that we might be wasting time, which aroused my professional guilt feelings.

When activities demanded more space, we moved out into the corridor. A few children were allowed to work out there, but only for quiet activities, such as reading and writing, or if we needed more space to stretch out for large murals. Approximately four children would use the corridor at any one time. We began to move the furniture in and out. All this activity caused concern about my supervision from neighboring teachers.

Other teachers began to visit my room and asked to speak at another faculty meeting about the summer school program. By the end of the year, the class was working all day in this way, except for math. The children had really led me the whole way. At times I felt I was the only one working this way, and yet realized the other teachers from the summer school were probably also working with children this way. There was no reason to be afraid, for I hadn't realized how far we'd gone. It was at this time, I began to read about the British Primary Schools.

June brought a trip to England, and exposure to a different stress on reading. I saw an Integrated Day where activities were not isolated from the rest of the classroom procedures. The British teachers asked leading questions, and stimulated children's interests as they moved about here, there, and everywhere. We saw how children's learning can be extended, particularly in math, and how important it is to display the children's work. The school really belonged to the children. The teachers' room had a different atmosphere - teachers talked to each other about children as learners rather than children as discipline problems.

The trip motivated 3 of us who had become interested to ask our principal if we could work near each other to develop these ideas together. We distributed several articles to the children's parents and to the principal. I began to realize that all this had changed me as a person because I became so much more aware of myself and my place in society.

From teachers written accounts and from conversations and discussions with some of these teachers, there emerged several personal characteristics which they seemed to hold in common. They each had a strong self-concept and were secure as individuals (an explanation, perhaps, of the dissatisfactions they each felt with their previous role and performance and their willingness to permit children to exercise choice and leadership). They were aware of their inadequacies and were able to admit their weaknesses; this caused them to seek help and to be flexible enough to make use of the help they received.

The teachers were motivated to make changes for two main reasons: 1) personal dissatisfaction with what they were able to do, and 2) concern with the children's responses. They were more aware of the children's reactions in particular instances which differed from the traditional program.

This awareness motivated each of the teachers to take the initiative, making small beginnings in a program area where they, as individuals, felt most comfortable and confident. They eventually changed the physical arrangement of their rooms. All of them coped with recurring feelings of inadequacy, which was part of the ongoing process of self-evaluation. There is no doubt that reading about open education in England brought feelings of confidence to an uncertain situation. Seeing what one is doing in print gives it credibility. Each of them was able to use the

most important resource -- the children -- as well as seeking other resources, such as people, literature, and materials.

One of the conditions that gave these beginnings impetus was a group exposure to these ideas in summer school, from which followed interaction between some of the teachers sharing their enthusiasm or concerns. However, all these teachers experienced working in isolation at some point.



Administration's Motivation to Change

At the same time within certain levels of administration and supervision there was a general feeling that change was needed with the educational system of the school district. This was demonstrated in part by the activities of two committees: the New Rochelle Critical Assessment Committee and the New Rochelle Educational Policies Committee.

- I. The New Rochelle Critical Assessment Committee was composed of community representatives, teachers, and administrators. The New Rochelle Board of Education approved a proposal made by this committee for 30 teachers and administrators to meet for a 2-day conference outside the school district. As a result of both general and small sessions, there were two major recommendations that resulted from this conference:

- A. The idea of establishing a demonstration elementary school where a Childrens' Learning Center could be provided; and where teachers who were beginning to change or wanting to change could be brought together.
- B. The formulation of an educational philosophy for the New Rochelle School district with the following aims and objectives:
 - 1) to encourage and guide the development of the child to two major goals:
 - a) self-realization;
 - b) becoming a productive member of society.
 - 2) to create an atmosphere in which...
 - a) students participate actively in their own educational development;
 - b) students have an opportunity to be involved in processes which enable them to reach informed opinions;

- c) students and educational staff are free to discuss all their concerns and the major issues of our society;
- d) the educational staff sees its role as one of guiding all individuals in their growth and inquiry;
- e) one-to-one teacher-pupil relationships flourish.

The proceedings of the conference were distributed to all teachers and some members of the community but no further immediate action was taken.

II. The New Rochelle Educational Policies Committee is comprised of 10 teachers and four administrators. It was formed by the New Rochelle Federation of Teachers and the administration for the purpose of reviewing education policies and making recommendations regarding these to the superintendent.

In January 1969, at an educational policies meeting, the New Rochelle Federation of Teachers expressed a need for a written proposal to provide the Children's Learning Center. As a result, the directors of the previous Summer School were asked to prepare such a proposal.

The articles on the British Primary Schools by Joseph Featherstone which were published in the New Republic led to a discussion of establishing a model school based on these ideas. A proposal for implementing such a program based on the philosophy of the "open classroom" was endorsed by the New Rochelle Federation of Teachers and was written and submitted to the New Rochelle Educational Policies Committee, which recommended it to the Administration. At first, the Administration rejected it -

primarily for two reasons:

1. setting up an experimental school could lead to its becoming labeled and isolated from the rest of the school system;
2. there was uncertainty regarding the worth of the research from the Primary School approach.

Therefore, in final draft, the word "experimental" was dropped, with an agreement that the program could occur in several elementary schools.

By late Spring 1969, approval from the superintendent was sought and gained for a) a summer educational program to expose teachers to the open classroom approach, and b) for planning the beginning of this program in at least one elementary school.

When the administration attempted to assess elementary school interest in beginning to implement this program in the fall, both Trinity and Columbus Elementary Schools indicated interest. In both these schools, there were already some teachers moving in this direction.

At this point, the question of funds for personnel and in-service assistance was raised by the teachers; later this concern was included as a strike issue by the New Rochelle Federation of Teachers in the teacher's strike of June 1969. In July the superintendent mailed a letter to all staff stating:

Through the initiative and efforts of teachers, administrators, and the New Rochelle Federation of Teachers, and especially our Educational Policies Committee, several important programs will be initiated for the 1969-70 school year.

1. Both Columbus and Trinity Schools will house classroom clusters modeled along the Infant School lines. Before their establishment in September, the administration will seek the understanding and cooperation of the respective school communities; and
2. allocate the funds necessary for the support of the program...

The Teacher's Federation of New Rochelle, having evidenced its interest in educational change by previously waiving its ruling on seniority, continued to evidence its interest in change and waived its ruling which excluded employing only staff within the district. Therefore, for the summer school of 1969, for the first time, outside consultant help was permitted.

Title I funds were allocated by the administration for the 1969 summer program for the continued services of a consultant, and for materials and supplies for the classes involved in the two schools during the 1969-70 school year.



SUMMER 1969

In the summer of 1969 a 5-week summer program for teachers and aides was organized to give them opportunities to become directly involved with materials; to develop observational techniques; to pursue actively mathematics, science, arts and crafts; and to participate in a 3-day intensive workshop to better understand the British Primary School. During this 5-week program, teachers and aides worked with groups of first- through fourth-grade children who were considered to be in need of remedial help.

In the workshops, the consultant made presentations describing the British Primary School and shared the teaching of a demonstration class of children with a beginning teacher. However, it soon became evident that the demonstration was not sufficient, so her role was revised to give more direct help in the classroom to the four teachers. Meetings were held several times a week for areas of concern to be examined and discussed in more depth.

The kinds of learning the teachers, children, and consultant experienced were challenging and significant. For example, several misinterpretations on the part of teachers became clear to the consultant:

1. The teachers had thought the importance of the environment consisted of a room with lots of materials and apparatus. Therefore, they arranged their rooms so that on arrival the children went immediately to the materials and began experimenting and discovering. Everything seemed fine, and the teachers were amazed that so many potential or actual problem children could become so easily involved and interested. However, during the second week the picture

was different. Children had worked through the materials and were drifting and bored; too many materials had been introduced with too little information on their use, potential, or purpose. Children began to misuse the materials.

2. The understanding of the reason for certain materials in a classroom and for the teacher's careful selection was missing. In many instances, there was a total reliance on equipment that had only a limited learning potential, e.g., tanagrams, geo-boards, etc.

Previously when teachers had used workbooks, they had tended to assume that children understood a concept when they had completed the section covering it. When teachers changed from workbook type activities, they continued to transfer the same assumptions to new materials. While this reliance on the materials represented an exchange of crutches, it was a positive step in the transition towards the better use of materials.

Children will learn if there are many materials in the room; however, the quality of the learning will be directly related to the teacher's understanding of what and how the children can learn from the materials.

3. After the teachers realized that teaching does not mean standing in front of the children and giving information, they became overconcerned as to the possible dangers of damaging the children's creativity by taking too dominant a role. Their previous experience had provided them with no other alternative but to take a passive role - withdrawing

from any involvement with either the children or materials. Teachers didn't realize they had in fact abdicated their role by not developing and extending the children's experiences and were bewildered as to what to do.

The teachers realized that they had started by swamping the children, and then progressed to being swamped themselves in their efforts to cope with change. Teachers' expectations in terms of the use of materials, of children's behavior, of the work the children produced, and their own active role were discussed with the consultant.

It is interesting to note that despite prior suggestions for teachers to move very slowly and to ease the children and themselves into working in a different way, none of the teachers were able to do so. Perhaps this is a necessary part of the process of change everyone experiences when faced with a new situation. Every teacher learned from the frustrating experience in summer school, and those who returned to operate open classrooms in the fall saw the importance of making the change very carefully and slowly.

Consultant's Role

In November 1969 the consultant began working on a regular basis with the eight classrooms implementing the philosophy underlying the open classroom. The role of the consultant was to provide opportunities for the teachers to have experiences and then to facilitate the teachers' role in providing experiences that would be relevant to the needs of the children. The consultant realized that without an internalization and commitment to the basic philosophy, any changes made would be temporary

and not relevant to the needs of the children. The essential and basic need was to help teachers begin to understand the process of developing thinking skills in children.

The consultant drew on the work of people like Jean Piaget and Nathan Isaacs who have contributed much information, such as the following, on the process of learning:

1. There are definite stages of conceptual thought which we all go through in a clear sequence.
2. It is not possible to leave out or skip stages - stage two is not reached until stage one is completed.
3. The learning process is continuous and cumulative; we build only on what we know.
4. This knowing begins at birth and grows from an individual's actions and reactions to his immediate environment, from the assimilation and accommodation of the individual's own actions.

There was a need to enrich, deepen, and widen the stages that both the children and the teachers were experiencing; opportunities for varied interaction with concrete materials were needed, as well as situations where the learning skills they had acquired could be reinforced and exercised in many different instances.

After 18 months the consultant reported:

Working intuitively for the first 18 months I found that I was approaching the teachers in the same way as they approached children. The similarity didn't stop there, for it became obvious that the teachers were experiencing the same learning process as children in relation to implementing this philosophy.

My role was very like that of a teacher in an "Open Classroom" - starting with each teacher's present understanding and building from there, through guiding, advising, suggesting and offering ideas. Then it was

necessary to take a firm stand, if it seemed the teacher or children were not ready to handle a situation. For some teachers it was necessary to restrain pushing ahead without sufficient thought and preparation. At the same time, it was necessary to give a push to a teacher who was ready to move forward but hadn't realized it.

First, I would meet with each teacher without her class; then we agreed on a time for me to visit the class. My first few visits were short. To accomplish effective change the teachers had to feel unthreatened by me, especially as they had instinctively tended to classify me as "Administration" which meant an evaluation of their teaching.* Watching and listening to the children in each classroom gave me great insight about the teacher and his or her perception of his role."

From observing and participating in the classroom and from discussions with the teacher, the consultant decided on the next step for each particular teacher at a particular time. For example, one of the teachers needed to be helped to become more aware of his role as the teacher in setting the standards of work for the children. It was suggested he not accept work he felt certain children could do better, but find ways of helping the children become more aware of how they could improve the quality of their own work.

*"One teacher's reactions to me: She was immediately very nervous when she found out who I was and talked nonstop at me. She didn't seem relaxed for a moment, and any comment made about her room was immediately taken as criticism. My very presence seemed to threaten her. Was this because she had not been involved in the summer program and, therefore, felt she had to appear equal to the teachers who were? She must come to accept me as someone whom she can turn to for ideas or help. As soon as possible after each visit, each teacher met with me to discuss what had happened. We shared ideas and alternative ways, talked of classroom strengths and ways of developing these. During these discussions, positive points were always emphasized, with care being taken not to tear down or condemn carelessly. As the teachers felt more confident in their abilities and realized they would receive support from me in what they wanted to do, change began to occur."

At first it was necessary to demonstrate the meaning of open education in concrete terms. The consultant used materials or apparatus with the teachers and with groups of the children, or assumed responsibility for displays,* or evoked discussions. The demonstrations were made very concrete and involved teachers in handling materials, as well as in discussions.** As with children, so with teachers, active involvement and first-hand experiences were necessary at this stage. We can only use what we have ourselves internalized.

The aim of the consultant was never to take over a class nor to give a brilliant demonstration, leaving the teacher high and dry. Instead, the aim was to work with the teacher as to how his or her needs and concerns could best be met. When a teacher felt the need to ask the consultant to take a group or the class for a specific purpose, then it was done. The consultant's role grew from the needs of the teacher. In order to establish communication, workshops were organized involving teachers from both schools. The workshops incorporated two strands -

*"We spent some time this afternoon putting up a display in the corridor of some of the work the children had done about New Rochelle - trying to demonstrate one way of using children's work to draw it into a whole experience and showing how you pose questions or stimulus for further work. I suggested to the teachers that they find books, maps, and any models the children make related to the topic and display them. It will be interesting to see if any of the teachers can carry on with this idea or if they still don't know what and how to display work for a purpose. They will probably need more explanation to make it happen."

**"It seems more and more necessary for me to be very concrete in my explanations when talking with the teachers or discussing different ways of doing something, in fact, it seems best if I demonstrate my ideas. As with parents, these teachers need reassurance and detailed guidance on little concerns and worries of the moment, and no matter how much I press bigger issues, it is not yet time for them to understand and use what I want to give them."

1) the immediate and specific concerns with certain curriculum or program areas and 2) the relation of these concerns to the overall development of children.

Growth and change came slowly and in varying degrees, with sudden leaps or breakthroughs and then plateaus when ideas were jelled or consolidated. Talking with and helping beginning teachers has made everyone involved realize how far they've come in their thinking since the first year.

Although sharing a common philosophy about children, each school developed in different ways. This is good. Too often people feel programs should be able to be reproduced exactly from a model. In the open classroom, the common thread is how children learn; each individual teacher interprets the information and experience she's gained by using her own strengths and interests.

For at least 3 months it was necessary for each teacher to concentrate on her own classroom, the children, and getting herself organized and trying out ideas.

Description of an Open Classroom

No two open classrooms were exactly the same - just as no two children and no two adults are the same. But, in the same way that children and adults share common characteristics, so do open classrooms.

1. Each child works in his own way as does each teacher, planning and using the classroom in his own way.
2. Although the arrangement of the room will differ in detail in order to meet particular needs of children at specific times and levels of thinking, most rooms share common equipment and supplies.

3. The room is divided into working bays or areas where materials, equipment, books, and displays are placed to provide for the following:
 - a) language development (a book-corner and writing area)
 - b) mathematics area
 - c) science area - including pets and plants
 - d) art and craft area, e.g., clay, paint, and other expressive media
 - e) scrap materials, sewing
 - f) current interest area(See examples of room arrangements in appendix.)
4. Desks are replaced with tables of different shapes and sizes which are used flexibly around the different areas for working on or for displays.
5. Materials and equipment relevant to a particular area are stored near the area and are accessible for use and replacement by the children.
6. There is a multitude of inexpensive raw materials such as spools, cardboard tubes, cartons, boxes, yarn, colored paper, bottle tops, buttons, rocks, shells, fabric pieces, etc.
7. In addition, there are tools and equipment such as scales, abacus, microscope, lens, measuring sticks, an oven, cuisenaire rods, mathematical games, building blocks, etc.
8. Books are everywhere in the classroom for pleasure and information; books written by the children as well as commercially produced ones.

9. There are live things such as gerbils, hamsters, fish or turtles, and growing plants.
10. Children's work (including paintings, stories, clay models, scrap models, discoveries they have made and recorded, observations of gerbils, plants, mathematical discoveries and practice) is displayed everywhere.
11. The children are free to move and to talk since both are essential learning factors for elementary children. They move purposefully, seeking materials or information they need from other children, the teacher, or other adults. Sometimes they work by themselves, sometimes with another child or in a small group, and sometimes with the teacher.

The atmosphere of an open classroom needs to be at times challenging, at times relaxing, at times cooperative, stimulating, and creative. The relationship the teacher develops with each individual child is of utmost importance. It defines his use of the environment and therefore, his growth and learning. The teacher observes each child in relation to herself, to other children, to materials, and to different situations. She listens to his expressions of interests, ideas, feelings, his questions and comments about his environment. All this information affects her way of working with him. She uses his ideas and then develops them for further learning.* Cooperation is fostered through the sharing of materials, information and ideas, and by working together

* (See appendix on Teacher's Accounts)

on a common interest. The teacher looks for and uses situations which will further a child's social growth, e.g., "Ask John to show you how he made a robot," or "Could you include another dog in your plan as Jane would very much like to join you?" The teacher's interaction with the child is built on trust and honesty so that she can help him cope with his weaknesses as well as capitalize on his strengths. This relationship works for the benefit of the whole group, as well as for providing for individual learning and personality growth.

As the children's work becomes more independent, the time-blocks for specific subjects become irrelevant and the day is integrated. This means the majority of the day is spent pursuing individual or group interests and assignments, with time to participate in class meetings such as discussions, movement, or listening to stories, poems, or music.

Beginning Concerns and Problems

Some of the beginning concerns and problems that seemed to crop up during the first year were:

1. An obvious lack of understanding of the total process of learning and its interrelatedness which caused the teachers to be very dependent on the consultant. This was indicated by questions and comments made by the teachers during the course of the year:
 - a) "Is it all right if mathematics and reading are included in activities?"
 - b) "Am I supposed to participate in the activities?"
 - c) "There isn't enough time to show every child's work."
 - d) "How do I get to every child during activity time?"

e) "How do I know if they're learning?"

As one teacher pointed out at a workshop meeting, "We tend to forget we have been teachers a long time and already know how to handle many of these problems. Instead we feel it's so completely foreign and brand new, perhaps because it has a label "Open Classroom" or "Activities," that when something goes wrong we feel we have to run to somebody. Before, when it was something everybody else was doing, we solved it."

This situation can be paralleled to children in a new situation; they also tend to cling, constantly check, and lean heavily on the teacher until they feel secure.

2. Many teachers felt that it wasn't necessary to give directions or suggestions to children when children were doing activities of their own choice; the feeling that the activity was sufficient in itself was still evident and reflected in present practice.

This feeling on the part of teachers is related to an inability to sense when a child's work should not be interrupted. We want to encourage involvement and concentration; however interrupting purposeful work at a designated time does not accomplish this any more than letting children continue to work when it is obvious most of them are finished and just drifting.

3. The question of choice seems to be difficult for beginning teachers to resolve. For example, the first step

seems to be for the teacher to determine the number of children to work in each activity; then through class discussion, decide which children will participate in each activity. At this point standards for the use of particular areas were established. After a discussion with the teacher about the necessity for rules in the woodwork area, one class decided on the following:

- a) only three people might use the woodwork bench at one time;
- b) tools must be replaced on the toolrack when a person was finished with them;
- c) nails and wood pieces must be put back in the box at cleanup time.

As the children became accustomed to working in the different areas, it was no longer necessary to choose activities as a class. At this stage, children continued work they had begun earlier and were more aware of the restrictions implicit in each activity. In other words, the children were gradually helped to become more responsible for their choices and how they would work.

The other facet of choice is the delicate area of a teacher's deciding when to encourage a child to complete a piece of work, or when to let it go unfinished; or when she assigns him to read to her; or when she suggests he work in the math area on a particular task that he has not tackled for awhile. The relationship the teacher has formed

with the child helps her decide when, how, and what she asks of him.

4. Perhaps the biggest problem was the lack of practical foresight, an absolute essential if a teacher is going to retain her sanity. Teachers needed help with things such as having the paint near the sink so when spills occurred a child didn't walk across the room with a dripping sponge or a wet picture! and having the woodwork in an area where tools and wood would not be walked on and where the noise would not interfere with other activities.

If problems such as these are thought out beforehand or remedied as soon as they appear, it can make the difference between confusion and efficient organization, between constructive and destructive, or non-meaningful, activity.

5. With many more materials and pieces of equipment in their rooms, teachers found it very difficult to cope with the housekeeping problems that arose. The rooms became cluttered and messy very quickly. It was impossible for either students or teachers to work purposefully and efficiently in a disorganized room. More effort was required on the teacher's part to make sure materials were replenished and available for the children's use.

6. Teachers also needed to understand that part of the purpose and success of working this way with children is to train them from the beginning to clean up and

leave everything ready for the next person to use. If a teacher is left cleaning at the end of the day, then there is something wrong with either the way she has trained the children or with the way she has the materials and furniture arranged.

Beginning teachers tend to have rooms that lack appropriate planning and organization. Of course, children will need constant reminders and help with the cleanup, but incorporation of cleanup activities from the beginning as part of the working style, discussion of and the necessity and reason for it will make it less of a major undertaking. Children must understand that the teacher is serious and that the task is necessary.

7. The staff tended to forget that children are natural creators, and given the opportunities, the materials and the encouragement, they would not be lacking in ideas. It is adults who tend to stunt and twist the children's natural ability. Because they had usually only taught in traditional classrooms, teachers beginning to implement an open classroom had a tendency to spend all their time and energy thinking up ideas for the children. One teacher expressed this when she reported spending every minute the night before thinking of things the children could do at the junk table.

Teachers needed help in understanding their responsibility for the learning in the classroom as differentiated from thinking up things or activities for the children to do. From this came the difficulty of recognizing and developing the children's ideas so that the activity didn't become "activity for activity's sake." The children's ideas

needed to be seen as possible starting points or a focus for extension and development.

8. Teachers felt an uncertainty in their new role in the classroom. This uncertainty may account for a) their reluctance or inability to set standards for the children, b) for their getting involved with one or two children to the exclusion of the rest of the class, or c) their initial avoidance of particular areas where they felt more vulnerable and unable to learn with the children. Previously, there was always a manual to isolate each step and define what should be covered. The fear of the unknown is always great.
9. Connected with the above problem was the inability of the teacher to select from the work the children produced during an activity time. At first, the teacher tended to show something each child had done because she felt it was important to appreciate and encourage the efforts made by the children. Later there arose the need to select and look at a piece of work in depth with the group; otherwise, nothing would come as an extension of an idea. The teacher could not always skate over the surface of each product. Many teachers had a need to extend the first stage too long, partly because of the difficulty of selecting something as a basis for common sharing. Only when teachers begin to select on the basis of

the possibility for further learning in the experience were they able to move to a more advanced stage.

10. The need for recordkeeping was one that had to be worked out individually by each teacher. At first they swamped themselves with too many different kinds of records which took hours to complete and also hours to decipher. After many personal revisions by the end of the year, each teacher had formed the records that were best suited to his or her way of working. Most evolved a quick checklist for reading and mathematical skills and then a more detailed record on each child's growth (see appendix). Keeping account of what children were learning and their current interests or projects in the class helped the teachers to select and provide further ideas or materials, as well as giving them a valuable record.

11. A further concern when introducing an open classroom was with children's behavior. As children began to form a more natural relationship with the teacher, their reactions became more natural. It was difficult for teachers not to take this behavior as a personal reflection of their ability to control the class.

External control, although needed for some children in some situations, is not as effective as inner control which develops as the child matures. In an atmosphere where children can work at their own level, the ability of each child to cope with being more responsible for his actions is going to depend on his social and emotional level of functioning. This becomes much clearer in a situation such as the open classroom.

It is easier to gauge each child's level of maturity and provide accordingly in terms of expectations for work and responsibility.

Instead of blaming the children for the way they behave, it is more useful to examine how we approach a particular child; sometimes we anticipate situations and so precipitate a problem.

The Corridors

Once the teacher felt more confident in handling several different activities within her own room, she was encouraged to use other spaces as shared areas, e.g., moving out to the corridor began by displaying children's work. It is significant that this move had to be limited to one class at a time before being expanded. The next step was to use the corridor for a few activities, e.g., blocks, mathematical equipment, book corner, and sewing. The activities and the number of children to move out was decided on by the group of teachers involved.

For awhile each class had a set time each day to use the corridor. As teachers felt ready, children from all four classes mixed and began to work together. Activities in the classrooms continued as before.

Several reorganizations of the corridors and classrooms took place. The move to the corridor not only promoted more communication between children in different classes, but necessitated more interchange between teachers as they realized that classes were duplicating activities, but not necessarily learnings, in the four classrooms. This led to a pooling of some of the materials in the following ways:

1. Woodwork in two instead of four rooms;
2. Dress-ups and a home corner in one room;
3. Blocks in one central place.
4. Cooking in one room.

As a result of trying out different organizations of their classes and the materials, teachers recognized that there were certain materials and activities that needed to be a part of each classroom as well as part of the corridor. For example, books, paints, mathematics, scrap materials, and an interest table were needed by all in common.

The gradual growth toward using both the rooms and the corridor enabled the children to work constructively in both areas as a part of their learning environment.

As with almost any kind of change, problems arose in the use of the corridor. The following are some of the problems that had to be solved in organizing the use of the corridor:

1. The teachers felt the need to have common expectations of behavior by the children. This was only necessary at the beginning because the children became involved very quickly.
2. In the beginning displays and equipment were broken, or taken by other children in the school as they rushed by. However, the open classrooms continued to put out displays, but left out valuable or expensive equipment. Gradually, the children from all over the school began to realize that the displays and materials would always be there. Now children from other classes stop for awhile to fix a mathematical puzzle, look at displays, read notices, and even answer the questions the staff has posed. Many times they even return later to help other children who are working there!

3. Since the staff worked as a team, they shared the responsibility of supervising the corridor by constantly giving the areas general checks, and by individual attention to the particular activity nearest each teacher's door. In addition, the classes used volunteer parents and high school students to help in both classrooms and corridors.
4. The entire staff needed to keep the corridor as well as the classroom environments stimulating and purposeful so that they didn't become "sterile" or outdated.
5. With the use of the corridors as an extension of the classrooms, problems developed regarding responsibility for cleanup in the corridor.

The staff found one solution, that each teacher be responsible for an area, to make sure the area was kept supplied and ready for use, as well as to see that the children replaced the materials.

At times, as in any classroom, things got out-of-hand and it was necessary to restrict the use of the corridor and take a look at what was causing the problem. The children began to move naturally between the four rooms as well as the corridor and comments like this were overheard from the children:

"Let's go into my 'house' to work." ("house" meaning classroom)

"No, in my 'house.'"

The spread of ideas, and the natural working-together of children of different ages and abilities and teachers, far outweighed disadvantages and problems that arose.

When there are several teachers working together, the variety of their strengths can be used to the benefit of their children, i.e., a teacher very interested in natural science has children from other classrooms join some of her children to work, perhaps, in finding out more about plants, insects, or rocks, etc.

Other teachers would have other interests and strengths. This valuable arrangement requires a great deal of interaction and discussion among both teachers and children. Children benefit from the interaction with different children and different teachers; teachers benefit from other teachers' observations of their children. The team approach can also relieve the pressures of having to cope with too many activities. Planning and working with children can then be in greater depth.

We may not be able to find the answers; we may only be able to relieve some of the situations that cause a particular reaction. The school psychologist, social worker, and school nurse-teacher can be of great assistance in filling in more details on a particular child; however, even they do not have a packaged remedy. It is the teacher and the child who must develop some working-out of the problem to relieve a situation.

Changes That Occurred Over 2 Years

Looking back over the first year, the consultant can see that a lot of learning came from a) in-classroom support and b) discussions and practical workshops. In order for increased learning to take place, it was necessary that there be a period of consolidation. The first part of the year involved making small changes and many mistakes; the second part of the year saw the beginnings of relating some past experiences to

the present, and consolidating these.

The first part of the second year has shown a tremendous jump in understanding the open classroom approach and implementing it. The teachers are now beginning to see the total picture of learning as it affects all areas. The difficulties mentioned are some of the more common ones that the teachers experienced during their first year of implementing as open classroom. The first year was concerned with the sheer effort of keeping on top of everything and establishing some organization or structure to work within.

The second year the teachers are more concerned with the development of specific skills or stimuli that help them better facilitate children's learning.

It is also interesting to see that the children involved for the second year in the open classroom are at a very different level in their ability to respond to and use an open classroom environment. They are at a point where they are able to function well in this environment and use many of their ideas. They are better able to discuss, relate to each other, and work independently and responsibly.

Then, in instances where both the teacher and children are in their second year's experience, the children have accelerated the teacher's growth, mainly because the teacher is now more sensitive to the children's needs and more able to use them as starting points.

First-year teachers with second-year children were not at this point of sensitivity and know-how and so there was a period of adjustment for both the children and the teacher. First-year teachers with first-year children move slowly but steadily. As teachers gather experience there is a need for constant refinement.

Parents' Relationship to the Open Classroom

The teacher and parent share a common concern and responsibility for the child. Therefore, for a child's education to be effective it must involve his parents. Learning not only takes place within the walls of a school, it occurs everywhere all the time. In a newsletter, some of the parents wrote to other parents:

You are teaching your child constantly, whether you are aware of it or not. He didn't have to sit in school for 5 hours a day. He wasn't given any tests. He wasn't given any marks -- he didn't even get a report card. But, he did have a teacher... YOU; and he did have a classroom...YOUR HOME. And he grew and developed and learned many things before he ever went to school. He even learned things that you did not want him to learn... things that made you angry; or things that could hurt him, like how to turn on the stove, before he learned about the danger of fire; or words that were not for "children" because he heard them around him.

When parents have more information about what their child is doing in school, the child can benefit in both the home and school situation. When there is communication between teacher, parents, and child, pressures or problems can be eased for all. Parents have a right to question, discuss, and become involved in their child's education. However, they also need to be prepared to recognize a teacher's ability to diagnose and treat learning strengths and weaknesses.

Since the open classroom program seemed new to many parents, the staff worked out ways of communicating with them. They began with some general informational meetings where they described different aspects of the open classroom, and provided a time for parents to raise questions. Beginning questions seemed to revolve around academic skills:

1. Are they getting as much reading?
2. Are they as "up" on everything as in regular classes?

Parents very naturally compared their child with other children on the same grade level, without any allowance for individual rates and levels of growth.

It became increasingly clear that many parents did not realize that the open classroom was as concerned as a traditional classroom in developing reading, writing, and mathematics. It is probably more concerned than the traditional classroom in creating more relevant opportunities for the children to use their skills, information, and understanding. One parent asked, "Which child would profit most, the one that is good with his hands or the more academically oriented child?" There seemed to be very real fears that children using their hands are wasting their time compared to children working from textbooks or workbooks, and that the two are separated skills in children. In other words, a child good with his hands probably isn't academically oriented. Parents seemed to believe and fear that this child would not get as far in life.

Another parent felt that, "you shouldn't give children independence or choice until they are in high school, and let them decide what they want." However, another parent felt the opposite, that the open classroom should stress the individuality of the children, helping them to think and, in turn, to become more responsible.

The belief that children will be capable of making responsible decisions after being prevented from doing so for 13 years is inconceivable. As with all skill development, particularly the skills of making responsible decisions, self-discipline and taking responsibility, a child needs constant practice and encouragement throughout the formative years. Only if children are helped to bear some responsibilities can they be helped to make the right decision even when "we are not around."

In each school an Advisory Board of parents, consisting of one or two parents from each open classroom involved was organized. The open classroom staff discussed the parents concerns and questions and ascertained from them how they could best meet the needs of the rest of the parents. The Advisory Committee was the open classroom's "ears and eyes" of the community. The Advisory Committee was responsible for bringing to the staff's attention other parents' questions and comments, and for relaying information to parents which they acquired from the parent advisory meetings. They accomplished much of this through a parent advisory newsletter (see appendix).

The following ideas were a result of these meetings:

1. Parents were invited to come and see the classroom operating.
2. A parent explained to other parents what happens during activity time when their child seems to be "playing"; that playing is simply a child's way of relating a significant idea to his small world.
3. Parents not only visited but became involved in the classroom with small groups engaged in particular interests or skills; for example, mothers helped children to sew, knit, or cook; listened to them read and read to them; or assisted the children in using clay, in writing stories, or in using particular words for writing.
4. Parents also proved to be wonderful resources in terms of providing materials such as junk cartons, wood scraps, fabric pieces, discarded children's

books, and pieces of furniture. This promoted the feeling that they were contributing to their child's education.

After several workshops and discussions of the advisory committee, a decision was made to plan workshops for all the parents of children involved in the open classrooms. Parent representatives would meet with a teacher and consultant to plan the workshop and then produce a newsletter to keep other parents informed. (See appendix.)

Gradually, information about the aims of the open classrooms was dispersed; and although the staff and parent advisory committee did not manage to actively involve all parents, they did have communication with many. The most meaningful contacts were made by visiting homes and in parent conferences, which the staff stressed could be held at any time convenient to the needs or concerns of parents. Parents were continually contacted by phone or letter and invited to drop in and visit or ask any questions they might have. Many parents found it difficult to do this because of the fear of coming into a school. They were accustomed to coming only when specifically invited or only when there was a problem to be worked out. Gradually, however, more began to come to school and communicate with staff on a more informal basis.

Over the year, several parents noticed changes in their children and voluntarily expressed their observations in the following notes:

I have noticed a great desire for books, especially ones dealing with science. He is not a great reader, but this hasn't interfered with his incentive to learn from books. This, I feel, is very important. If a child who is not a good reader can still find great joy in books, he will become a good reader. The feeling of failure is not there the way it might be in a more formal classroom setting.

I believe the creativity which the children have developed is directly a result of this program. My child has been creative not only at school but at home. I find she is very receptive and enthusiastic about new facts and ideas.

Tom has an enthusiastic attitude about his classroom activities.

The attitude towards school and towards learning interests me most - far more than the actual material they cover - but I do not feel the children are in any way short-changed on material. "Charlie's" reading and mathematics skills have progressed enormously this year and his enthusiasm for school and his eagerness to learn are impressive.

The staff found that having more contact and communication with parents was beneficial to both the children and to them; and as one parent wrote:

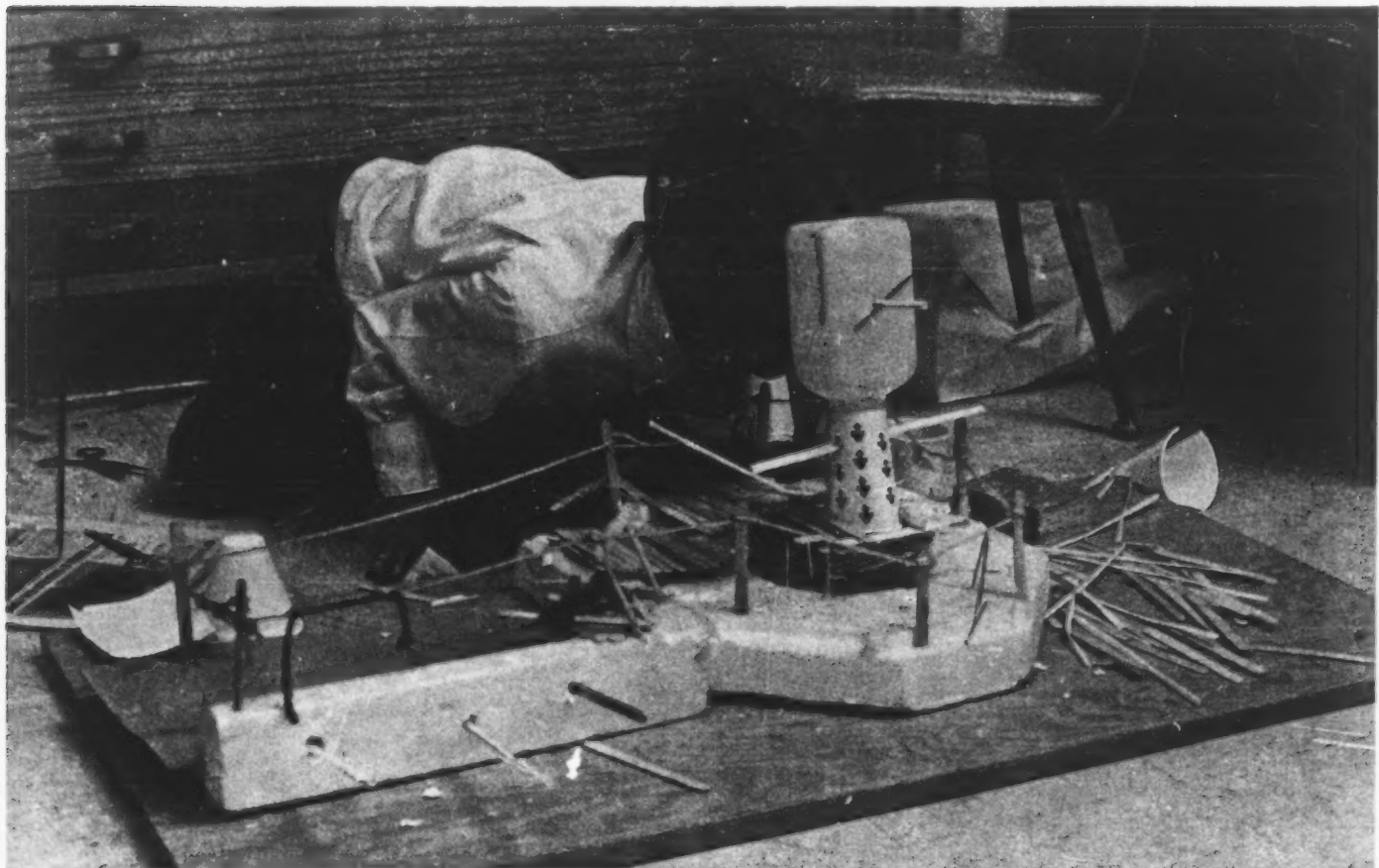
The encouragement for the parents to join with the school staff, in a sharing cooperative effort to make the learning experience profitable and productive for the children, is rewarding and satisfying to all.



OPEN EDUCATION AND THE FUTURE

"Open education is facing the possibility of rapid growth. Consequently it faces serious perils as well as opportunities; with its emphasis on student choice and initiative, open education can easily be a cover for those who don't know how to relate to children and who are unsure of what is best for children. Like a similar groundswell in the 1930's, 'Open Education' when employed by those who little understand it, can easily degenerate into sloppy permissiveness and wistful romanticism. For open education, if anything, demands of teachers the deepest thinking-through of what learning is, what knowledge is, and what their craft is.

"The movement toward open education has been evolving in England for more than 50 years, a fact that does not seem to deter those, who in the American tradition, would stimulate a fad or mount a crash program. Change which is too rapid, however, accompanied by little understanding or acceptance of underlying rationale and assumptions, can only have the effect of adopted terminology, modified appearance, and a confused and inconsistent experience for children."



New Rochelle has made a beginning in implementing both the philosophy and practice of the open classroom. The success and growth of the open classroom will depend on the interest, involvement and understanding of all the educational personnel in a school district. The degree of change will be directly correlated to the ability of school personnel to adapt new roles or new modes of behavior.

Teacher's Role

The greatest change, perhaps, will have to be in the revision of the teacher's role. The very base of her thinking will be subject to continuous change. This is an enormous feat requiring great energy, involvement, dedication, and sheer grit to keep going. Teachers will need patient understanding and support from school administration and parents in order to make the many necessary trials and errors that are essential for their professional growth and change. Teachers must have time to work through problems, as well as to accumulate experience. They must also be supported by being near other teachers working in the same way, so that ideas and problems can be shared and discussed. A teacher will do his best work if he is given the opportunity to use his initiative and judgment at every point. When much is demanded, much will be given. Another element of support is on-the-job training, practical classroom support, and workshops. There is a continued need for on-the-spot training from a primary school or teacher trainer consultant. This is necessary because guidance can best be provided by personnel who have had experience themselves in teaching this way.

Consultant's Role

The consultant must relate to the needs of children, teachers, parents, principals, administration, or any other personnel involved with the schools; and he must also react to the situation of the moment in the classroom. This person must be able to listen to constant anxieties and pessimism, and to offer support and encouragement continually, while coping with the red tape that the implementation of such a program encounters. For the past 2 years, the New Rochelle consultant's role was that of facilitator between Administration and principals, principals and teachers, teachers and children, or teachers and parents, rather than that of a director or supervisor which implies checking up and giving directions. A facilitator promotes a two-way communication rather than the directive, one-way kind. Needless to say, all this facilitating would be rendered null and void without one crucial factor - the facilitator's ability to form trusting human relationships.

The Principal's Role

A principal will need to adopt a role much broader than that observed in much current practice. Priority will be more obviously placed on the following: 1) learning along with the teacher, 2) supporting by giving encouragement, 3) showing interest as well as seeing that adequate basic materials are supplied, and 4) providing the needed information to answer parents' questions.

Parents' Role

Parents are eager for a role of greater involvement in their children's education, and the open classroom can provide many opportunities for them to participate and learn. From parents' increasing knowledge

will come the needed impetus for change; if they can be helped to see their role in the learning process, they can be significant contributors to the learning opportunities for children in both the school and the home.

Children's Role

For the children, the change of role is perhaps the most natural, although it depends on the age of the children involved. It seems the older the child the greater the adjustment. That the older should find it more difficult to accept responsibility, to work independently, to discuss, to cooperate, and to relate to others is a reflection of their previous experiences. Children's reactions to an open classroom also vary with age; first-graders rarely comment on any differences but accept it naturally as "school," but a first-grade visitor to an open classroom took part in the following dialogue after working all day in the room:

"This room isn't a classroom, it's a playroom."

"What makes you say that?"

"Because it doesn't have any desks."

"How do you feel about that?"

"Well, my room has desks and there's no room to do anything!"

Older children, more conditioned to the arrangement and expectations of a traditional classroom, make comments such as this fifth-grader who was delivering a message to an open classroom: "this looks like a house in here." Surely what we are aiming for is the good connotations the word "home" implies.

Special Teacher's Role

Other changes of role involve special teachers in areas such as

reading, music, art, physical education, speech, and library. In an open education classroom, the specialist will function as a resource in a way very often described, but seldom observed in actual practice. They will pick up and extend children's current interests and needs as well as support the teacher with supplementary skills in specific areas.

These special teachers will need to work in the classroom side-by-side with the teacher. Each of them is a valuable resource for any teacher. They often respond with real interest to teachers in the open classroom. Far less time is needed to control the whole class in order to give a prepared lesson which is only relevant to a small number of children and more time can be given to using their particular skills and expertise with both children and teachers.

Psychologist, Social Worker, Guidance Worker, Nurse-Teacher Roles

The psychologist, social worker, and guidance worker can be of great benefit in supplementing the teacher's understanding of children's behavior and needs. The careful observation of children by the teacher is also of benefit to the specialist and enables a fuller picture of a child to emerge. With communication more precise and consistent, more help can be given to the child.

Custodian's Role

The custodian and cleaning staff also have a new role to play. Their first reaction to an open classroom or corridor is one of horror at having to clean around all the materials and activity areas. One custodian was upset at first because he could no longer push his broom in a straight line down the corridor. It is necessary for them to be involved from the beginning and to reassure them that much of the cleaning will be done

by the children. (Then make sure this is done.) Perhaps ways can also be found for letting them share a personal interest with the children, e.g., helping with woodwork.

Top Level Administration's Role

Perhaps the most important change is in the role of the top-level administration. The administration will have to reexamine their expectations for teacher behavior in light of this new approach to learning. The implementation, growth, and development of any program is possible only to a limited degree without active interest, support, and encouragement by the administration. Hesitation or noncommitment can undermine growth and be the cause of a leveling-off or petering-out of change and effort. Perhaps the most evident reason for the hesitation or tentative support is a misinterpretation of the meaning of accountability and evaluation. Part of the new role of the administrative personnel is the revision of criteria in evaluating learning and in the determination of accountability.

Evaluation

The test of true learning is in the ability to use appropriate thinking skills to meet each situation. Standard achievement tests do not show this; nor do they show initiative; responsibility; ability to relate to others; or level of intellectual thinking; or attitudes to learning; or carryover at home; or where and what the gaps are in a child's understanding, ability to solve problems, use of imagination, creativeness, and ingenuity; or awareness or sensitivity to a child's interest and learning style. At the present time, there are no standardized tests to measure these vitally important factors, and yet without

this information, the picture presented of a child is a shallow and nearly meaningless one.

Growth and change is a process that means simultaneous and continuous definition and refinement; there can be no finished, completed product or package that is the remedy for all problems. Channels of communication which operate effectively and efficiently have to be developed in order to facilitate the working and growing together of all levels of personnel. The open classroom will have many misunderstandings and misinterpretations, and misuse, but some elements must survive if we are to improve and individualize American education.

Needless to add, the most necessary requirement for change and continued growth is to have the courage of one's convictions.



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APPENDIX I

Teacher Accounts of Movement Toward an Open Classroom Approach

Teacher 1

In 1967, I heard Lillian Weber speak about the "Infant School" and asked her for ideas which could be used with my 6th grade class. She referred me to the Nuffield Books as a way to begin. It wasn't until February that I felt ready to begin.

I had culled ideas from Nuffield and developed some handwritten math problem cards. My principal was aware of my attempts with the Nuffield Math and gave me encouragement and permission for the children to go outdoors to gather information. One day when one of my students had finished her work early, I suggested that she choose a card from the measurement section of the box. Carol needed experience in measuring. Off she went to the playground wall and began to measure. Carol came back with her measures and proceeded to write up her work in a simple sequential chart form. Some of the other children wanted to know what she was doing. It was contagious. We planned a time for two more children to go out to solve another kind of problem. After this the children became involved in finding many things to measure inside and outside the room. The children and I were both excited about the learning taking place.

A copy of the ESS trial edition of the Balance Book stimulated an interest in weight and balance. With wood which I provided, one group of children built some balance scales from the directions and pictures given them. The next day, two other boys came in with the result of

work at home the night before: balance scales they had made out of wood, paint stirrers, metal bars, fishline and plastic tips. We now had six scales. The children couldn't stay away from the table; they wanted to weigh and balance everything!

In the fall of 1968, children in my new class found it easier to make a choice of a math card as soon as group work was finished. We set up a balance table again.

The principal was pleased with what we had been doing and was encouraging other teachers in the school to come in and visit. Two of these teachers began some planning with me. I went to another teacher's class and helped her with adapting plans and ideas for older children to work with younger ones, and observed and helped wherever I could. One teacher sent two of her children to my 6th grade with the stories they had written. The 6th-graders corrected them for mechanical errors, typed them, and put the stories in folders for the young authors to decorate back in their classroom.

The two younger children who brought their stories to be corrected and typed began to work with the balancing materials on the table while they waited. They did this about twice a week for several months. One day, one of the 6th grade boys observing young Peter and Frank working on the balances, said, "Mrs. Z., they've tried some of the same things we did and they've made the same mistakes we did, too." Out of this balancing work, we developed a simple log (record) of 1) what materials were used, 2) what was done, and 3) what happened! I became aware of inadequate skills to "stretch" my children.

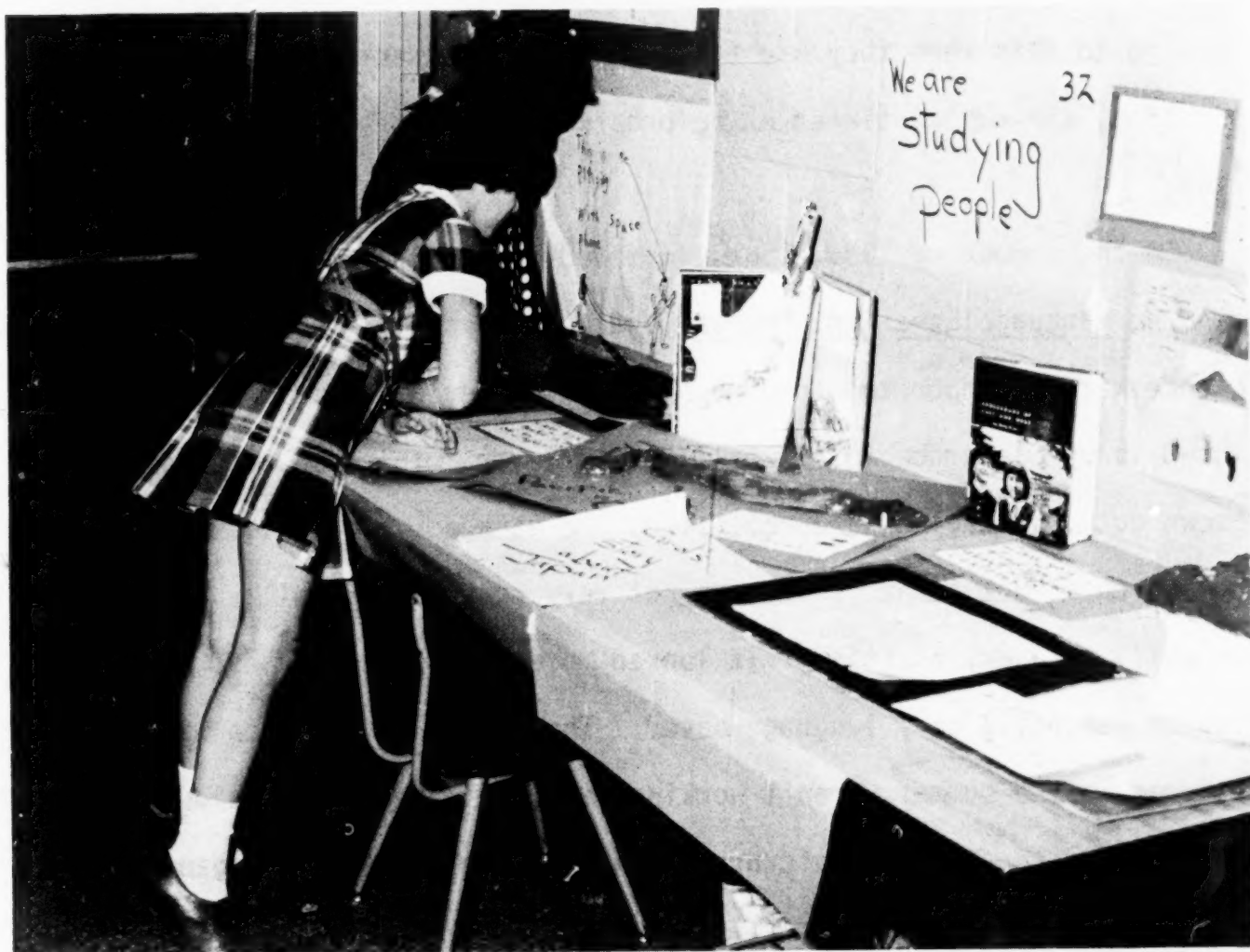
Another teacher and I were asked to give a workshop in another school which was also beginning to change. It was a workshop on the use of the Language Experience approach in other disciplines; I did math

and the other teacher, social studies.

At school we were pursuing the idea of becoming involved in the "Open Classroom" program for the fall; I had to consider taking a lower grade level. While I feel strongly about the tremendous value for the upper grades, I know that the success of the program meant training children from the early years.

It was also at this time that someone mentioned the idea of going to England to see some of the Primary schools using an Integrated Day approach. For two weeks in June 1969, two teachers from other schools visited some of the schools in England with me.

In the fall of 1969, I took a third grade and became part of four classrooms beginning an integrated day.



Teacher 2

At first I was satisfied with the way I was teaching. I became increasingly dissatisfied until it was necessary to do something about the situation. The children and I had more discussions than ever before; however these were accompanied by guilt feelings about whether this was really teaching. At this point, the class time for language arts was lengthened. So four language arts centers were arranged. These consisted of 1) a listening center, 2) reading table, and 3) an assignment. The children were in assigned static groups which moved every 25 minutes so the children had exposure to each of the centers.

This experience gave me a tolerance for children's movement and for changing the furniture around frequently. The children wanted to do other things so an art table at the back of the room was set up; the children could go to this when they had finished the other centers. Except for this time, the day continued as before. No change was made in math until later.

In the summer of 1968, I was involved in the language arts approach with the Language Experience Manual and workbooks. Art, music, and science were incorporated through study of different birds. When I returned to my classroom in the fall, I did several things: the desks were thrown out, and tables were requested. We managed to get folding chairs and set up a book corner which was not very cosy as I recall. The room was still not very exciting; it looked more like a factory and the curriculum was still very language-based. The things we had done with the children in the summer weren't working; e.g., the children would say, "Do I have to write about the picture? Can't I just paint?" I began to question and reexamine. "Is this the way it should be?" I realized that

sometimes it is important to paint and not use the painting experience as a language base. The teacher has to be responsive from the beginning so she can accept and utilize the thrust from the children which moves learning.

Making filmstrips was another activity which led to a lot of involvement of the children. We were slow in starting a junk table because I was afraid of what seemed the functionlessness of the material - it was too open and unknown. However, by May when I realized that an activity can exist for itself or as a link to other activity, a junk table had evolved in the classroom. In fact, many things began to change their function at this time. The activities became less structured by me and more by the children; e. g., the listening center now had tapes made by the children. I finally realized that the educational hardware was gimmicky and successful only for a short while. Now, if equipment is not needed, it is not part of my room.

Summer school of 1969 made me anxious to return to my classroom. This time we would attempt to change math, but it wasn't until later in the year that we realized a breakthrough in math and it became more activity-centered, as did the whole day. I was still not satisfied, for the program seemed too impoverished. For awhile, another teacher who influenced science activities worked with me. By now, the mornings held every activity while the afternoons were devoted strictly to math and science. The little interaction I managed to get between the two rooms didn't grow because the one room was not stimulating enough to attract and involve the children. By June, it seemed I couldn't struggle alone any longer. Working in isolation is horrible. There is a strong need to have other people who share your interests and concerns and with whom

you can talk. Otherwise, the teacher doesn't know if the things she is experiencing are being felt by anyone else - she may think she is the only one having these feelings. The teacher is trapped in her classroom.

We tried using the corridor, but the janitor replaced everything we put out. If a teacher works in isolation, there is a big chance she'll get no support if she spills out of the room. I felt what I did was right as long as it was contained within the rooms. It is difficult for a teacher to effectively implement an open classroom if there is an unwillingness or lack of understanding of others in the school to let this happen.

Summer school of 1970 brought more experience in working with children and in being involved in workshops and discussions. This year I am better able to cope, partly because my principal and I understood each other's expectations, and I feel more freedom to operate and make decisions.



Teacher 3

I had read Summerhill. Through trial and error, I had learned to let children roam freely on class trips and had seen their growing enthusiasm, self-control, and learning.

While working in an institution, I had seen dull children learn more on a weekend camping trip than they had learned in a whole semester of class work.

For years, I have known my own limited capacity for learning in any traditional setting; I always do much better when left to my own devices.

Experience had led me to believe that children in my special education class had been damaged by the schools, and that any change for the better would certainly not come from similar situations and methods. Yet these traditional methods were still my major means of trying to accomplish what I really believed couldn't be done.

It is regrettable that it wasn't until two years ago, when I had an opportunity to listen to and talk with people involved in open education, that I began to conceive of an open, child-centered classroom. Yet from my present framework of operating and teaching, it seems unthinkable that I ever could have taught in any other way.

A 1969 summer experience in the open classroom workshop greatly changed me; I believed in the philosophy of the open classroom immediately, even though I was unable to put any of my new feelings and ambitions into practice during my summer of teaching and I did see changes in children. The children were unusually happy during that summer in the learning process. I attributed the change to the teacher's removal of the repressive controls from the school day. Eagerly, I awaited the fall and the return to my known world to change my teaching style in my own way. I felt a

special accountability to the parents of the children I was teaching.

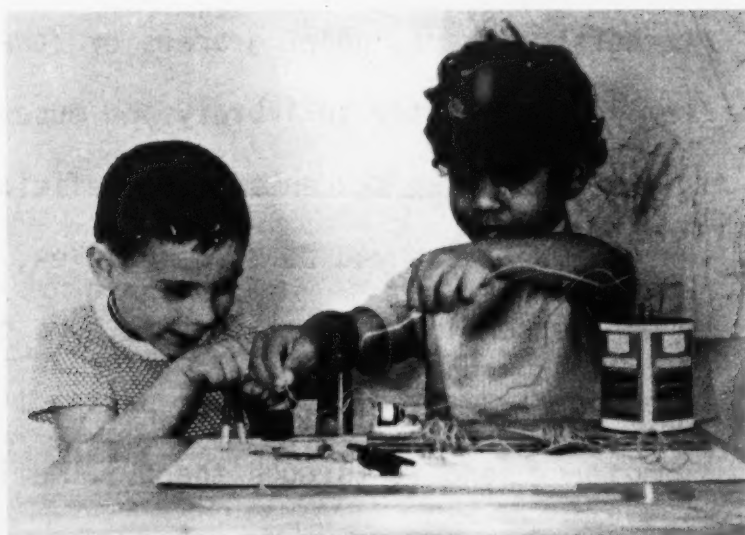
After having completed training for teaching in the "open classroom" I now realize that each new class and each new child requires additional thinking. To me it seems possible and necessary to create a workable situation for learning and growth with each new student.

Learning is gradual, it seems to leap ahead and then rest before leaping ahead again. Anyone trying to change teachers must know when to put pressure on them and when to leave them alone to assimilate and consolidate their knowledge, understanding, and skills. Attitudes of teachers must be changed; however, no one can do it for them. Only an individual can change his own attitudes. The only thing anyone else can do is to provide an example that, hopefully, others will want to follow.

There have been three stages in my development as an open classroom teacher:

- 1) First of all, I was ready for the basic ideas of the open classroom, indeed, I already believed in many of them. I needed to be shown how it was possible to create a free learning environment and to be pointed in the right direction.
- 2) Secondly, my direct involvement in and commitment to the philosophy of the "open classroom" gave me the courage and strength to go all the way in working with students to give them responsibility for their own learning. This was very difficult, for many times I felt I couldn't achieve my goal. It was disappointing and discouraging that the necessary environment, atmosphere, encouragement, etc., couldn't be provided all at once. The children were much more capable of handling freedom than I was; it finally became obvious that I must change myself before the children could be provided with the most optimum learning experience implicit in an "open classroom."
- 3) Thirdly, my classroom situation held a minimum of pressure for it was comfortable, a place where we could experiment in peace.

Everything worked out well for me. Now, I feel more confident about entering almost any new teaching situation because the many experiences I've had with children go with me.



APPENDIX II
PARENTS INVOLVEMENT

PARENT ADVISORY NEWSLETTER

The Parents Advisory Board

I guess we've all asked ourselves at one time or another, "Why am I here?" This seemed to be the central question of the last meeting of the Parents Advisory Board for the Open Classrooms at Trinity School. The parents were asking the teachers just what can we do to help? Of course, each parent can contribute something to so rich a program as that presented by this type of education. In fact, there seems to be no area of interest that is beyond the scope of interest presented within the curriculum, the entire philosophy seems to me to be to present the children with a complete life situation to deal with, to learn with, to focus upon and dissect and solve, applying all that they know and subsequently finding out what they don't know and need to know.

With an interexchange of ideas from student to student, from teacher to student and even from student to teacher. Indeed a fascinating learning situation to which each person involved, student, teacher, parent, brothers, sisters, upper graders or lower graders plus the community, from local industry to library and museums, all have something to contribute, with the students the beneficiary of all these programs and processes. What can you do to help? Yes, that's what everyone is asking so we are sending a questionnaire home to find out. Mr. & Mrs. Smith have undertaken the task of preparing it and either your child will return it or send it through the U.S. Mail. Please be sure to return it

or send it through the U.S. Mail. Please be sure to return it as soon as possible.

Our next meetings will be programmed to follow specific topics for group discussion, namely; does this type of program teach mathematics, reading, and other basic skills? Is the report card that parents receive adequate?

Our next meeting will be held on January 12, 1970 at 7:30 p. m. and we have asked each parent to please make note of any specific questions you have concerning this program. Write them on the questionnaire or call your representative for your child's class.

Remember, if you have any type of unneeded measuring tools, wood-working tools, any kind of tools, send them to school. If you have some old clocks, unused machinery, paper tubes, plastic boxes, egg boxes, yard goods, typewriters, scales, thermometers, thread spools, timers, your child needs it in school.

The Parents Advisory Board

Please take a few minutes and answer this questionnaire. Be sure that any assistance you can give will be appreciated and it will also give you a chance to take part in the new way of teaching the children. Mail the questionnaire to:

- | | Yes | No |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Are you willing to assist your child's teacher?
(she will discuss and explain to you how you can
help if you answer this question in the affirmative) | ____
____ | ____
____ |
| 2. Does either parent have an interesting hobby
or skill which he or she would be willing to
talk to the class about? | ____
____ | ____
____ |
| 3. Does either parent have an interesting occupation
which he or she would be willing to tell the
class about (almost any trade or occupation is
interesting to the children!)? | ____
____ | ____
____ |
| 4. Do you have any material suitable for arts and
crafts work as for example, cloth remnants,
cardboard, plastic containers or workable
pieces of wood which you would contribute to
the class? | ____
____ | ____
____ |
| 5. Do you have any comments about your child's
classroom activities? | | |

Parent Advisory Newsletter

The after-school workshop for Open Classroom parents last Thursday proved a surprise. We couldn't just sit there, we had to do something.

There was one exception. Of the various areas of activities around the room: block building, clay, constructing with junk, science and math, language arts, movement and cooking, there was in one corner a traditional classroom set-up. From this quiet spot could be seen a frequent curious face looking about at the excited activity while listening to teacher lecture on spelling and geography.

Meanwhile others were discovering new methods of learning. Many of us came assuming that for instance, when our child says, "I played with clay today" it means he was just messing around. But as one mother commented after the workshop, she was surprised to find what learning potential was actually harnessed. She learned that when a child makes an Eskimo community it means reading up on the subject, thus exercising reading ability and learning about a culture as well as geography. Then he might measure for proportion and later write a description or story of what he has done.

Block builders realized that there is quite a science to making bridges and tall structures. The mothers in "movement" found themselves strangely unspontaneous in the bodily expressions of their imaginations. Was it the body or the imagination? People in science experimented with ice cubes and found that the one in the colder room melted faster???

Overall feeling of the afternoon, aside from pleasure, was a reassurance that our children are indeed doing a valid kind of learning and that emphasis was on discovering instead of being told. One negative, rather wistful comment, was that it would have been fun to learn some of the math games our children play. That could be another whole workshop-maybe at night this time.

APPENDIX III

Sample (1) Examples of Teacher Records

Weekly plan and evaluation

Activities: Sewing; clay; paint; scrap materials; dressing-up clothes; water; book-area; mathematics area; use of house; blocks.

Language: from words they thought of e.g. mouse - house, link up with other rhyming words. Talk about the silent film they saw and relate it to their plays; Peter's play had a silent part in last week. What it is called e.g. miming.

Number: words that describe size - link to the sunflower and sweetcorn - small, little, tiny, minute; big, large, enormous, gigantic, tall, high, wide, thin.

Music: Tall thin man; Animals in the Zoo; Clap up High; One little Brown Bird.

Movement: Big and small movements to sounds - big and small both vocal and instrumental (drum, cymbal)

Stories: George Washington story; Gumdrops; Smoked Fish.

Natural Science: Take in Large Sunflowers and other yellow flowers or leaves. Find words that describe the colors and see if you can reproduce the colors or make new ones using yellows and oranges. Go for a walk to look for seeds, pods and grasses.

Evaluation: some of the children found and used some rubber foam scraps and a discussion we had led from Ellen's bath to what happens when you squeeze a piece of foam? When you put it under water? We tried foam and tissue in water and squeezed them; most of the group knew that tissue would not regain its original shape and why. Then I put a wood block in the water and all of them told me I couldn't squeeze any water out of it but they weren't sure why. Randy said "because it is hard! Miles, 'only things that are soft you can get water out of.' So got a piece of soft clay and they all agreed it was not hard like wood and were very surprised when no water was squeezed out. Several children made scrap models and used the clay. There is a better use of these materials they seem to have more purpose when they are using them.

Andrea experimented with foam in water, by putting a small piece in paint water she noticed that the foam took on the color of the water. She put pieces in three different colors. I used this in discussion and she demonstrated what she had done watching how the white clean foam took on the color even when the liquid was squeezed out. She left some in the paint-water overnight. The next day we looked and saw that they contained a lot more color when left for longer in the paint. A lot of children were inspired to try this for themselves and several timed how long they put the foam in for; some printed with their pieces. They noticed how hard the foam became when it had had paint in and was left out in the air.

A group of boys did several good detailed pictures of different parts of cars and went on to find out the correct names for the different parts.

G. is finding it difficult to stay with the group and seems to respond to very firm reprimands with a chance to get back into the group without obvious adult supervision.

Weekly Record for

Month

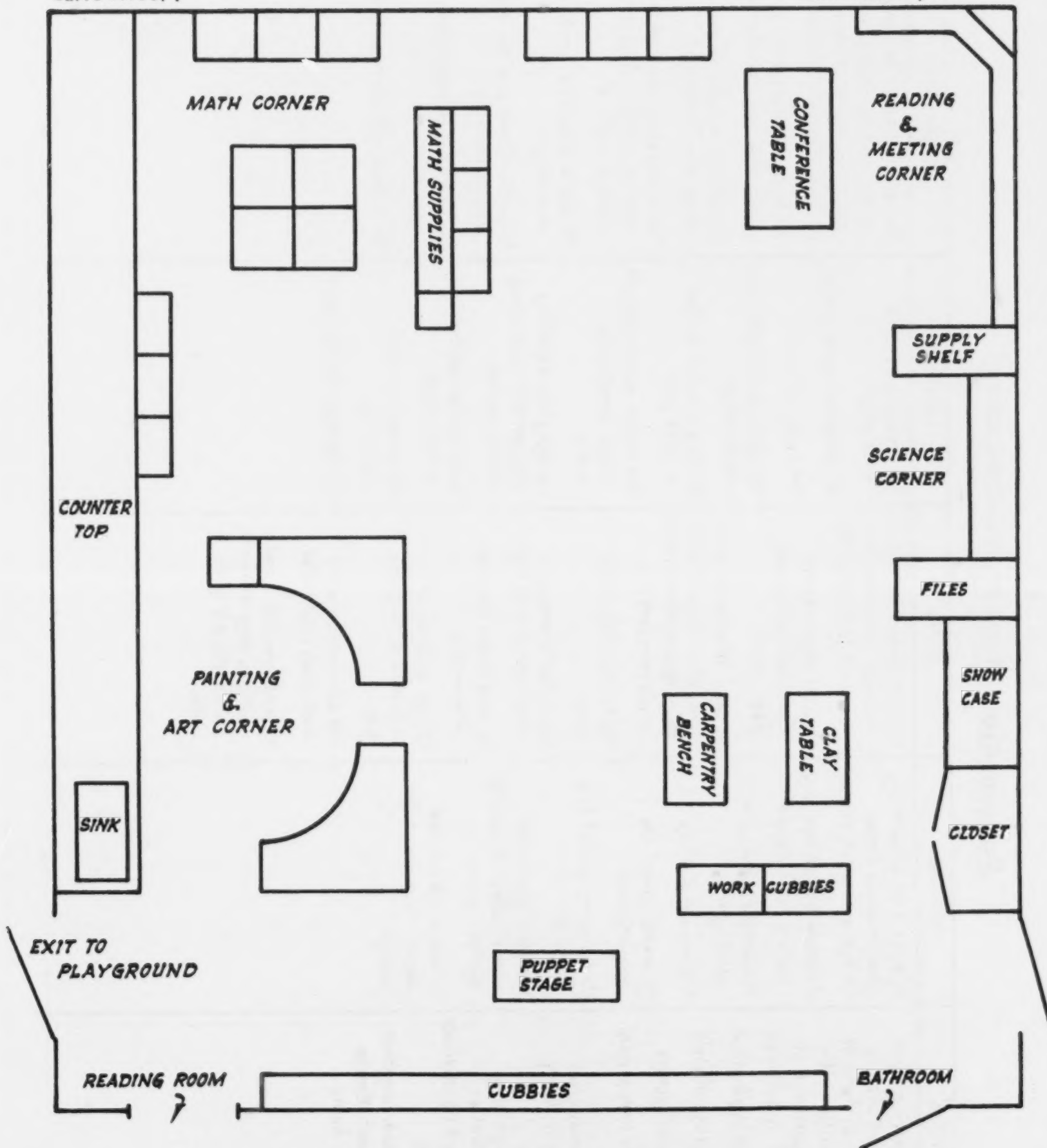
Reading	Writing	Math	Interests	Comments
(Animal Bks Rabbit Bk Encycl. + Basal Reader Play)	Wants to write so badly - still insecure - needs support - dictated story + wrote "rabbit"	Good 100 chart clock Poor in < > in large nos.	Apollo 14 book - good Animals - bunnies	7/5 Lots of reading + more writing - weepy - insecure fearful week
Good-Bad Rat question three Pigs Abe Lincoln Story	Compound words - needs help improving at answering questions very little - just lot 2 sentences about book she read + animals	Dice game Count 2, 5 (good)	Rabbits Animals in class Book done	2/12 Still unhappy - tears - Children said they sang better - very insecure needs lots of support at writing - doesn't try hard enough.
Red Hen Cat book	very little - fearful. tight	Time-Ext 2:10 Count by 2's over 100 11, 12, 15 facts	(Short-story dictated turtle story) Cat paint (lovely) " book	

RECORD FOR (NAME OF INDIVIDUAL CHILD)

READING	WRITING	MATH	INTERESTS	COMMENTS
1/10 Reading from Tales to Read. Is unsure of herself especially with new words, but in fact reads well. 1/17 reading better 1/29 reading steady 2/3 more fluency 2/7 on to Peppermint Fence. 2/11 Spontaneous reading in book corner. 3/6 recognising words better. 3/14 reading continues steadily 4/11 Is much smoother and fluent. Reads lot at home.	1/9 Does a lot of writing but in small doses. Prefers to draw more. 1/15 Wrote about her play picture with Tanya 1/30 Started writing a play with T. 2/14 Told me a story 3/6 wrote about her experiment 3/12 3/13 wrote about the gerbils 3/28 used typewriter wrote about a beauty parlour play. 4/11 wrote about the seeds. And about our party.	1/10 Used cuisenaire rods to make patterns - did not want to develop this. 1/13 used pegs & board counted red & green pegs used. 1/17 Used abacus for 10-9; 10-8, etc. Unsure at 1st then saw pattern. Needs much reassurance. 1/29 Subtraction card well. 2/12 Cooked from book used cup and 2/3 cup. 3/5 used cubes for game of numbers 3/14 Has got idea of subtraction in single nos. 3/20 subtraction card well. Uses water a lot. 4/11 add. and sub. good cooking. Very accurate gals., qts., pts with water.	1/10 drawing designs and plays. 1/17 dressing up for a play. 1/24 away all week. 1/29 scrap materials - and more plays. 3/7 Play about a mother & little girl 2/20 made and painted large cardboard house 3/14 Enjoying watching the gerbils and using home corner. 3/20 Is always mother in her plays 3/28 printing and painting. 4/11 Interest in the seeds.	1/10 Does not seem to have a great many ideas and is showing signs of being rigid. (Is this pressure at home?) 1/29 Is hard to stretch - very tight and unadventurous 2/7 Perhaps A. cannot do more than she is doing? 2/20 Is working well at better level of achievement and always with T. 3/4 more creative work, not so ordinary. 3/20 With T. and L. a lot. Much dramatic play. 3/28 Involved in own interests this week. 4/11 Is involved at deeper level now.

CLASSROOM

SEPTEMBER , 1970



NOVEMBER, 1970

